aster. Moreover, as we have seen, the foreign wars and the T'ai P'ing Rebellion led to a reaction against the foreigner and his ways. These had threatened the existence of the Empire. It seemed to intelligent men to be the part of prudence to hold to the old ways as the only sure safeguard against more of the anarchy of which the nation had had so unfortunate a taste. Hence scholar-statesmen like Tseng Kuo-fan and Tso Tsung-tang sought to strengthen the cultural heritage of the Empire and identified this in part with the neo-Confucianism of the Sung. The Sung philosophy, moreover, with its subjective qualities, offered a refuge and a consolation in face of the uncertainties and threatened upheaval of the times. The precious years of reprieve, therefore, instead of being used for thorough-going reorganization, became only a breathing space before the *descensus Averni.*

The main events of these years in the relations with Western governments can be rather briefly sketched.

One early development was the collection of the customs duties under the supervision of foreigners. In 1853, during the T'ai P'ing Rebellion, a group of rebels (not T'ai P'ings) took advantage of the general disorder to occupy the walled city of Shanghai and the imperial machinery for the collection of duties on foreign imports and exports broke down. After brief and unsatisfactory attempts to find a substitute, by an arrangement between the consuls and the local *taotai* the Chinese appointed (1854) foreign nominees of the consuls to supervise the payment of the customs. The system worked well, and by an Anglo-Chinese agreement of November, 1858, its extension to other ports was made possible.

When the conventions of Peking (1860) charged against the customs the indemnities then assessed on China, a further organization of the service became necessary and a foreign Inspector General was appointed by Peking. In 1863 there carne into this office a remarkable Irishman, Robert Hart. Under his direction the Imperial Maritime Customs, as it came to be called, had an extraordinary growth. Its chief posts were held by foreigners of several nationalities, the British outnumbering those of any other citizenship. In a government honeycombed with corruption, the service was honest. Under it not only were the duties collected, but the coast and some of the main navigable rivers were provided with lighthouses and buoys and an imperial post of a